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Select Tale.

[From the Pioneer.]

FACTS---NOT FICTION.

A TALE OF THE SOUTH-WEST.

BY MRS. S. A. DOWNER.

It was one of the most oppressive mornings I had ever experienced, with that peculiar, muggy and unwholesome state of the atmosphere, that, had it been a few months later in the season, would have given rise to the expression, "real yellow fever weather." For a couple of hours it had rained, as it only can rain in New Orleans, in perfect torrents, flooding the streets, and rendering the crossings impassable while it lasted, or sinking a few inches, to be returned in vapor from the reeking pavements, as the sultry rays of the sun again broke forth with redoubled heat. The very air, as it entered through the glass doors, opening on the balcony, seemed laden with "Yellow Jack" and cholera. Lounging upon a sofa, too languid for any exertion—even to wave a fan required an effort—I began to count up the many months that would elapse, ere we could reasonably expect cool weather. This was early in April, and I quite shrank from the long rage of Summer, while the bare thought of mosquitos made me more nervous. I ran over in my mind the advantages and disadvantages of the various watering places that open on the Gulf of Mexico, and finally concluded that home was the best place after all;—decidedly the most comfortable place, if—one could only obtain a little fresh air. This was not to be expected, and I soon fell into a reverie, the subject of which was cooling streams, shaded by forest trees, and fanned by refreshing zephyrs; or, of deep caverns by some lonely sea-side, where shelter from a tropical sun might at least be obtained. I had reached this point, and was profoundly sighing, "O for one breath of northern air!" when a young servant, who had been sent to the post-office, returned with letters, which he placed on the sofa-table beside me.

"A glass of water, Sam," and I took up the letters.

They were from beloved friends. The first was dated from Mississippi, and contained a cordial invitation for me to spend the summer at the rural home of the writer. It was filled with glowing accounts of flowers then in bloom, of fruit just ripening,—to be followed by successive varieties,—and of the whole-soul welcome that awaited me if I would come. This was very gratifying. A sip of iced-water, and I opened another. The second was from Louisiana, on the opposite side of the river, and bore not only an invitation, but almost a command, to "pack up" and make them a visit. It said: "We are all here at the upper plantation, where we shall remain until May, when we leave for the north. In the meantime, do come up; everything is looking so green and beautiful. The change will do you good and I have a great secret to impart. Of course it is quite useless to ask your good *mari* to accompany you, but I know he will not object to your coming without him. I shall therefore expect you on the next trip of the Magnolia, and will send the carriage to meet you at the landing."

"The very thing!" I exclaimed, "and it will be killing two birds with one stone!" Our *'mari'* did not object; *au contraire*, a superficial observer might have been led to suppose, from the alacrity with which any little deficiency pertaining to the toilet was obtained, and the solicitude exhibited in providing for all possible wants, that it was to be a mutual holiday—a trial of freedom extremely gratifying to at least one of the parties, but when the Saturday morning came, and I took possession of my commodious state-room, one had only to look in his honest face, as he placed me under the care of that prince of captains, the popular commander of the Magnolia, and read the expression of deep love, that welled up from a loyal heart, and filled his eyes to overflowing, to be satisfied that the advantage to be gained by another, was the sole consideration.

I had traveled so often with Captain T., and on that very boat, that it was with quite a home feeling, I seated myself at the door of my state-room, and glanced at the scenery as we passed up the coast. The river was high—almost even with the banks—affording a fine view of the rich sugar and cotton plantations, that stretched far back to the swamps, whose cypress trees, draperied with funereal moss, offered a strong contrast to the gay flower-gardens, beautiful shrubbery and the evergreen trees which surround the planter's mansion. These are spacious square buildings with rectangular roofs and a veranda partly enclosed with lattice-work, over which climbing plants cluster, to the exclusion of the sun. Hedges of rose and hawthorn, with groves of orange and lemon trees, spread on every side, extending almost to the levee's edge; while noble live-oaks with myrtle and China trees hide, with their thick foliage, the walks and arbors that environ these quiet abodes. It is pretty, but monotonous. Higher up fewer signs of cultivation appear, and after passing Bayou Sara, long intervals elapse before there are any signs of culture or settlement. The second day offered so little of interest, that it afforded sufficient time for my womanly curiosity to exercise itself in conjecturing the secret I was to learn.

That it was to be a wedding, I felt almost certain; but whose could it be? My friend was a widow—a widow for the second time, and of two years' standing—but no! it could not be her wedding. Widows do sometimes marry the third, or even the fourth time, but not she! it would have been almost sacrilege to doubt her constancy. There was a daughter, and a lovely girl she was; it must be she. To be sure, she had just left school, but what of that? it was not uncommon for school girls to marry, or for girls to marry and go to school afterward. When I had got thus far, I ran over in my mind all the eligible matches my fancy could suggest, but not being able to settle it to my satisfaction, gave it up. Two days and a night brought us to the mouth of Lake St. Pierra, where I was landed and placed in the carriage by our ever courteous captain, after seeing my trunk well secured behind, and the troublesome bandbox on the vacant seat in front.

We rolled along the banks of the beautiful silver lake, just as the declining sun was sinking behind the thick hammocks of live oak on the opposite shore, where reposed large flocks of sheep, protected and kept together by a shepherd dog. The air was redolent with fragrance from the fresh opening blossoms of spring. A gentle breeze raised light curling ripples on the face of the stream, that sparkled and glowed with the rays of the setting sun. In its bosom vast shoals of mullet, with innumerable other fishes, rejoiced in their spring-day life, secure from hook or net. Thirty years ago this was the favorite hunting ground of the Choctaw, and where is he now? West of the great Father of Waters he may find forests as deep, with lakes as clear; as warm a sun, as bright a sky; but will he ever again find a turf so green, or a spot so dear, as this on which his infant feet first trod? But we have no time to bestow on the red man or his wrongs, for an hour's drive through this beautiful region brings us to China Grove, the residence of my friends. It had become quite dark, but friendly voices greeted me on the portico, and loving hands drew me to the back dining-room, where the tea-table was spread, over which, bright lights gleamed, and where, conspicuous above all, stood a huge dish of strawberries, the first of the season.

And now, dear reader, to the inmates; for it is too dark and shady outside to attempt any description either of the house itself, or its surroundings. And first, let me introduce you to the mother of the family, and the mistress of this large plantation. Mrs. Morris is a lady of about forty-six years of age. She is tall and well made, of full proportions, with rather a dignified air, at the same time both graceful and gracious. Her complexion is rosy, her eyes are dark, her hair is nearly black, and so inclined to curl, it is with difficulty she can keep it smooth, parted over a rather low brow. She has a charming expression; her face beams with benevolence and affection, smiling on all around, and seeming as if it were her sole desire to make every one as good and happy as herself. She is dressed in mourning, for the recent loss of her oldest son, and this accounts for the impression of a chastened sorrow that her countenance wears when in repose. Emma, the only daughter, is sixteen, but looks to be a year older. She is quite as tall as her mother, with a slender and elegant figure, and finely chiseled features. Her delicate complexion is relieved by large, dark eyes, full of sensibility. She has a profusion of glossy hair of almost purple blackness—a rare tinge—and her cheek resembles more the leaf of the magnolia blossom, than the rose. She is very beautiful, her smile peculiarly so; with a quiet grace, gentle and self possessed, but rather wanting in animation. Of the four boys, this could not be said; they were sprightly and good tempered, with much refinement of manner. Wallace, the oldest, was all animation and wide awake to all that was going on, from the heaviest business of the plantation, down to the braids of his sister's hair, which it was his especial delight to see dressed by the skillful hands of her maid. He was an ardent admirer of beauty, not so much of the beautiful, as of beauty; and 'Now Clarise, fasten a white rose here,' or 'bring that band a little lower on the temple,' could be heard in passing her dressing-room, where Wallace, standing in the doorway admiringly contemplated his beloved sister, who, book in hand, sat quite indifferent about the matter. Who blames the love of beauty—the admiration for grace of manner? Not we. The only mistake is to suppose that this beauty is a thing of form and coloring, merely. But we forget the tea-table, with its steaming black tea, delicious white biscuit, and well-buttered waffles, with the ripe strawberries, "smothered in cream," which Emma dispensed with a bountiful hand. Tea over, we withdrew to the well-lighted and elegantly furnished parlor, where began such a flood of questionings and answers, concerning mutual friends in the city and out of it, that the evening had nearly passed, before I could turn my attention to two other visitors I found there when I arrived.

The first was a niece of Mrs. Morris, from O., a young lady the same age as Emma, but how unlike! Catherine R., or "Cousin Kate," as the family called her, was a lively, airy creature, light and bounding as a fawn, with a wild, fanciful beauty in her bright, blue eyes, and in the play of her pretty features. Her radiant mouth was a perfect Cupid's bow, and her sole occupation on this evening seemed to be that of making others laugh, whether they would or not. The other was a Mr. Selvyn of Washington, late from the Island of Cuba.

The son, Mrs. Morris had so recently lost, was the only child by her first marriage. During his stay at college in a northern State, were sown the seeds of a disease that developed itself with alarming rapidity, soon after his return to his southern home. After months of alternate hope and despair, he was ordered to make trial of the milder climate of Cuba. Mrs. Morris accompanied him, taking Emma with her from her boarding school in New Orleans. While on the Island they became acquainted with an American family of great respectability. The acquaintance was productive of mutual pleasure, the young people became almost inseparable, and the intimacy soon ripened into the warmest friendship. When Mrs. Morris was obliged to return home, Edward seemed to be improving. He was received into the family of Mr Selvyn as a son and brother, for which their gratitude was only equaled by their hopes. Those hopes were soon to be destroyed. A few weeks brought word of his sudden demise, and they were but now recovering from the blow. This much I had known before, as also of the kindness extended to the poor invalid, who breathed his last under their hospitable roof. The present Mr. Selvyn who had passed many years in Europe, was the son of the friend in whose house Edward had died. He appeared to be about thirty-three years old and of middling height, with a remarkably fine head. His black hair was soft and curling; his eyes, of deep blue, were full of feeling; his teeth like ivory. His countenance bore the stamp of intellect and mildness, his deportment was exceedingly refined and gentle, his manners were highly polished; while his conversation, replete with information, proved, that during the years spent by him abroad, he had been all eye, all ear, and all grasp. But not in one evening, reader, did I discover this; his attainments were not more conspicuous than his modesty.

"Is he *le futur?*" was my whispered inquiry of Emma, when I took leave for the night. She blushed "celestial, rosy, red," but made no attempt to reply.

Mrs. Morris accompanied me to my cool, airy chamber, where the neatly matted floor, windows draperied with thin, white muslin, and a snow-white bed, gave promise of luxurious rest, exceedingly grateful after the fatigues of travel. She carefully closed the door.

"You need not tell me," I exclaimed, "I have found it all out myself; when is it to take place?"

"In two weeks; when we leave for Louisville."

"In two weeks!" I repeated; "why, you scarcely know him."

"That is true," she replied; "yet not exactly so either. We are sometimes placed in such circumstances that the conventional rules of life are disregarded, and we become acquainted in less time than a fashionable code requires; circumstances that bind us in friendship forever with those who but an hour before were entire strangers."

I assented. "Mr. Selvyn had impressed me favorably, and if they were satisfied I had no reason to demur."

My exclamation, which seemed to imply a sense of unbecoming haste in the arrangement, appeared to have dissatisfied her, as with a certain stateliness of manner she proceeded.

"The engagement took place before we left Cuba, with the express understanding that a year or two should expire before their marriage. Had my son lived, we should have adhered to this determination; but ——." She applied her handkerchief to her eyes as she turned away for a moment. Recovering herself, she continued: "My Selvyn pleads so strongly for an immediate marriage, that I cannot resist. You are aware how perfectly unexceptionable the match is, in point of family, education and fortune. The latter consideration is of little moment. Emma's portion is large; more than enough; and Mr. Selvyn promised never to take her from me; so that instead of losing a daughter I shall gain a son. His moral character is of course beyond suspicion. Indeed, were I to look the world over, I could not find one with whom I should be better pleased."

There was nothing more to be said; yet, as I lay awake in my comfortable bed, I could not but contrast their ages, and surmise how so superior man as Mr. Selvyn, with his cultivated tastes, could calmly contemplate the plodding and oftentimes revolting features of plantation life; or how confine himself to the limited circle that would surround him in their princely residence at O. My cogitations did not prevent me from enjoying a night of delicious sleep, from which I was awakened as the day broke by strains of melodious music. I opened a window, and there, on the topmost branch of a magnificent crape-myrtle, stood a mocking-bird caroling forth his song of love to the ears of his happy, listening mate.

I was soon dressed and on the gallery. A mist from the lake still hung over the grounds that were laid out in elegant walks and flower-beds, with hedges of rose and althea. A long avenue, planted on each side with trees, whose interlacing branches formed into a perfect arcade, led down into the garden, whence Jerry, the old gardener, at that moment issued, bearing a bouquet of mammoth size, composed of every variety of tea rose, which grows here in the greatest magnificence.

"How d'e, uncle Jerry?" and I extended my hand.

"How d'e, missis? I's right glad to see you;" and the faithful fellow shook the hand warmly, in which he placed the bouquet.

"Is this for me? It is really superb!"

"Yes, missis. I knows how fond you is of flowers; sorry we've no figs ripe yet; but you'll stay till there is?"

"I shall stay two weeks, uncle Jerry."

"Two weeks! O, missis, you must stay all summer."

Old family servants feel as much bound as their owners to pay every polite attention to their master's guests; and the greeting from them is frequently fully as cordial; while such is southern hospitality, that were one to remain a whole year with a family, it is not improbable that when the time for departure arrived, the remark would be, "Just stay one year longer, or even six months, and they would not say one word; but to go now——!" To speed the parting guest is altogether unknown, or unpracticed, in this part of the country, the 'welcome' extending indefinitely; but this, *par parenthese*.

I looked, and lingered long in the sylvan scene, now on the side gallery, and then on the front, where the sun was rolling the mist from the crystal lake, whose bright waves danced and sparkled, breaking into a thousand brilliant hues, as the water rippled and rose. I was soon joined by Emma, looking lovely as early morning, who greeted me with a kiss as she bade me a lively *'Bon jour.'* I inquired after the health of Mr. Selvyn. She smiled, and soon after spoke of her approaching marriage, but with a tranquility of manner that was quite alarming.

"Do you love him, Emma?"

"I admire him greatly, and suppose I shall love him; but I am so very young that I scarcely yet know either life or myself. Besides," she continued, after a pause, "my education is still incomplete. I lost so much time from school during the long illness of my father, and since then my brother, that I am very deficient, and feel how unsuitable a companion I shall be for a man like Mr. Selvyn."

The bell rang for breakfast. Emma seated herself near her mother, whom she aided in the most graceful manner during the simple repast, quite regardless of herself and attentive only to the wants of others. The time lost from books she had employed in assisting her mother in the discharge of the multifarious duties imposed upon a planter's wife, or in attendance in the sick-room, ministering to the wants of the sufferer; bearing with the weakness, or soothing the temper, disease had rendered querulous. While thus engaged, what she had lost in elementary knowledge she had gained in all the womanly attributes that adorn and sweeten home, and in those truly feminine attractions that should be the end of knowledge. Mr. Selvyn proposed that on their return in autumn she should commence a course of reading, and resume some studies under his supervision. A glad assent to this had been given.

The two weeks which intervened between my arrival and the wedding day were very busy, indeed. There were so many finishing touches to be given to the wardrobes of each, so many directions concerning the business of the plantation, and so much to do and attend to in various ways, that it kept Mrs. Morris as busy as a bee. Kate and I lent a helping hand, as Emma was completely monopolized by Mr. Selvyn. I think I never saw a lover more delicate in his attentions. He was but little demonstrative, yet he listened to her lightest word, or with an eye beaming with affection, he watched her every movement.

"There is something about Mr. Selvyn that I do not like," remarked Kate, one morning as she and I retired to the piazza, having felt ourselves somewhat *de trop* in the parlor. "Why can't he go out sometimes, and not remain there looking at Emma as though she were the only being in existence?"

"Why Kate! I consider him every way *comme il faut;* but he is in love; and you would not wish a lover to have eyes or ears for any other than his mistress?"

Her lips curled.

"Take care, Miss Kate! if ever your day comes, you will make a most exacting tyrant."

"Try me!" she retorted, with an arch smile, her countenance instantly recovering its good-humored expression. 'But really, Mr. Selvyn seems to possess very little energy; and there is a want of frankness about him that doesn't please me. Why don't he visit some of the gentlemen who have invited him? instead of which, he sits and watches Emma, as if he was jealous of her."

"How he watches us all, dear Kate, as if he feared we should talk treason to her;—but see! here are the horses, and yonder comes Mr. Laguerre; have you forgotten that we are engaged to ride with him, this morning?" Let us go."

The wedding took place; and never was there a more beautiful bride. Brides are always beautiful, or should be, but in this instance we concede nothing to the character. Her dress was of India muslin, with deep flounces of costly lace. A diamond pin, of great value, fastened the berthe in front, and this, with the bridal wreath and a bouquet of rose-buds she held in her hand, was the only ornament she wore. As she entered, leaning on the arm of Mr. Selvyn, she turned a little pale, and then a little flushed, and at last had just the right quantity of bright, beautiful color. The relations and friends for miles around graced the wedding with their presence, each declaring that a handsomer couple had never been seen. Emma's self-possession was really remarkable, as she gracefully received their congratulations; and when the excitement had a little subsided, she stepped out on the gallery to the assembled negroes, each dressed in holiday array, (with a full holiday before them,) that they might behold her in her bridal attire. They were loud in their expressions of rapture, the more so, as Selvyn showered silver tokens with a liberal hand. Aunt Betsey, the cook, pronounced him a "ra-al gentleman;" to which her listeners responded, with the exception of the old nurse, who had had the care of each child from the moment of its birth. Phillis, alone, of all the sable crowd, seemed dissatisfied; as with a portentous shake of the head she declared, that "She didn't like such short courtships no how."

"Why Lor', Phillis, any one can see he's a gentleman."

"He oughter be a gentleman. Why not? and he oughter be a mighty good gentleman, too, to deserve Emma."

A round of dinners was given to the bride, when the party separated. Kate returned home, I, to visit other friends, while the family pursued their route to the north. After placing the boys at school, Mrs. Morris, with Selvyn and Emma, visited every place of note, or fashionable resort. I received frequent letters from them, as also from other friends, at the same time sojourning at Newport and Saratoga. Emma's beauty and grace were the themes of general comment and admiration. She was indeed resplendently lovely. Renewed health gave a brighter glow to her cheek, while the diverse and gay scenes, in which they mingled, imparted to her spirits the animation they had heretofore required. They returned home in Autumn, and it was with a proud satisfaction, that Mr. Selvyn was presented to their old neighbors and friends at O.

How delightful they felt home to be, after the bustle and excitement of fashionable travel. Emma and Mr. Selvyn were now for the first time to enter upon the realities of married life, and their path seemed strewn with flowers. His unbounded devotion had awakened in the breast of Emma a profound and passionate sentiment of affection. She loved with all the depth of her nature, oftentimes trembling at the completeness of her bliss.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

☞ The Secretaries of the New England Association of Clergymen, have issued a circular, exhibiting the most encouraging success toward the object contemplated. The purpose of the association is to embrace three thousand Clergymen of New England as life members of the Kansas Emigrant Aid Society, on paying the sum of twenty dollars each.

☞ "Does the court understand you to say, Mr. Jones, that you saw the editor of the Auger of Freedom intoxicated?" "Not at all, sir, I merely said that I had seen him frequently so flurried in his mind that he would undertake to cut out copy with the snuffers—that's all."

☞ "Samivel, bevare of the vimmins as reads no noospapers. Your father married a voman what read none, an' you're the sad konsequins." You're as hignorant as an 'orse.'

The City of Cadiz.

The city of Cadiz is completely surrounded by walls. On three sides they are washed by the sea, and on the land side, there is a regular series of bastons and ravelines, terminated by a glacis, which is seperated from the inner works by a ditch. Across this ditch there are several bridges, affording a passage to the numerous pedestrians, animals, and vehicles which enter and leave the city by day. At night they are drawn up, and all intercourse with the country is cut off until daybreak, when the city gates are again thrown open.—The points of communication with the water are two—one for the foreign commerce of the city, and the other for the ingress and egress of the inhabitants or strangers, and for the articles of consumption required for daily use. The first is a dock built out into the water between two projecting angles of the wall, and opening into the city through the Seville gate. Tho' exceedingly limited in extent, it was the centre of the vast intercourse of Spain with the countries of Europe, and with the western hemisphere, during the commercial prosperity of the city. On this narrow platform were received the countless millions of gold and silver dug from the mines of Mexico and Peru, and the supplies of merchandize, the products of European industry, which were sent back in return for all this treasure. It is now literally deserted. Cadiz receives nothing from abroad, excepting what she consumes, and the high tariff of Spain has given a death-blow to all legitimate commerce. A large portion of articles which enter the city are either contraband or charged with enormous duties; yet there is an abundant supply of both classes to be found in the shops. The importation of cotton fabrics from other countries is prohibited; yet English muslins and French calicoes are as freely vended as though no such prohibition were in force. Other articles of merchandize, the introduction of which is charged with duties prohibitory in effect, are as freely sold, though the duties are never paid. They are, of course, introduced by smuggling, the necessary fruit of every system which has for its object to annihilate, or clog with unjust and injurious restrictions the commercial intercourse of mankind. The smugglers have as little respect for the direct as for the indirect prohibition; and the consequences are, that the consumers pay dear for the commodities they require, the government is defrauded of its revenue, the open contempt in which the law is held tends to engender a spirit of hostility to all law, and the community is demoralized through the large numbers who gain their livelihood by an illicit traffic. It is said that smuggling is carried on through the connivance and by the aid of the public authorities, and that it has become a source of revenue to individuals high in power, whose influence is employed to perpetuate the commercial system out of which it has grown. Some months ago, an individual connected with the court, was urged to lend his efforts to a reduction of the rates of duties fixed by the present exorbitant tariff, and one of the arguments addressed to him was: that it would put an end to smuggling. His answer was, If you put an end to smuggling, what will become of the sixty thousand families who live by it? It may readily be seen how large a portion of the commercial transactions of the kingdom depends on it. The species of commerce makes very little show. It neither requires the aid of public docks, nor carries on its operations in the face of day; and as Cadiz has scarcely any other, there is as great a want of commercial activity, externally, as can well be imagined.

BITE OF MAD DOGS.—We find the following in an exchange paper: "An English journal says that an old Saxton has been using for fifty years, and with perfect success, a remedy for the bite of mad dogs, by the agency of which "he has rescued many fellow beings and cattle from the fearful death of hydrophobia." The remedy is to wash the wound immediately with warm vinegar and tepid water, dry it, and then apply a few drops of muriatic acid, which will destroy the poison of the saliva or neutralize it, and the cure is effected.

Old Fogyism—Owing a printer's bill.